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Bisexuality and Christianity: Negotiating Disparate Identities in Church Life

Within popular discourse bisexuality and Christianity are seen as incompatible identities. The Official standpoint of the Church of England as expressed in ‘Some Issues in Human Sexuality: A Guide to the Debate’ (2003) and the statements from the Roman Catholic Church concerning education in ‘The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School’ (William 2006) go some way in influencing this incompatibility, as they conceptualise bisexuality as inherently un-Christian. However, at the heart of this supposed incompatibility lie misunderstandings of both bisexuality and Christianity.

Bisexuality has been conceptualised as being synonymous with promiscuity (House of Bishops 2004, 283), as leading to multiple partners and adultery (Wishik and Pierce 1995, 125) and as being incompatible with marriage (Rogers 1999; Rosefire 2000). Wider society has also misunderstood bisexuality as fence-sitting (Kaplan 1995), disease-spreading (Boulton and Fitzpatrick 1993) and as a midpoint between heterosexual and homosexual desire (Kinsey 1948). It is within the melee of identity negotiation that Christian bisexuals have to construct their religious and sexual identities. Contemporary research into Christianity has suggested that Christianity has shifted from an institutionally regulated religion to a more personal and interpretative form of spirituality (Heelas and Woodhead 2005). Key terms such as the ‘Turn to Life’ (Woodhead 2001) where the ‘self’ becomes the centre of the belief system and similarly ‘Religious Individualism’ (Roof) have been important in highlighting the move away from ascribed formal worship towards individualised faith. It is my assertion that this has also been the case for bisexual Christians who have had to struggle to find space for their identities which as previously mentioned are often portrayed as being contradictory.

This chapter, which draws upon data collected from a UK survey, explores the strategies and techniques used by bisexual Christians to be both bisexual and Christian within the realm of the Church and how the respondents lived their religious lives as bisexual individuals. I focus upon religious life and practices, namely what they do as religious individuals; religious flexibility and how the respondents adapt their faith; and the option of leaving organised religion as a way of preserving faith. Previous research has been primarily concerned with the life-stories of gay men and lesbians, with bisexuality tagged on as an afterthought. Therefore, research specifically looking at the lives of bisexual men and women who are Christian is an emerging area of investigation. During the next section I will give an overview of research specifically on bisexual Christians but also the research on ‘non-heterosexual’ Christians which sees bisexuality as distinct from homosexuality.

Christianity and (bi)Sexuality

The common trend with previous research into bisexuality and sexuality has been the concentration on internal exploration, focussing upon personal struggle and self-reflection. It is clear that little work has been done to collectively analyse or interpret life-experiences in an empirical fashion. Academically, the only collection specifically concerned with

bisexuality and spirituality is '*Blessed Bi Spirit*', a collection of papers exploring personal reflections on the reconciliation of sexuality and their spirituality. The book highlights the need for research into bisexuality and spirituality on an institutional level. However, there is consideration of Paganism (Dobbs 2000), Catholic workers (Dykstra 2000) and the American Presbyterian Church (Craig 2000). The response from the individual authors, with regards to Christianity, seems to be to engage in what Wilcox has referred to as the 'Bible Buffet' (Wilcox 2003, 56). This is the technique of taking what might be useful from a religion and incorporating it into your life-style. However, it seems that a good deal of the time the respondents' in such research were free to move away from the Church. What happens if this is not possible? Furthermore, what happens if faith is more important to the individual than sexuality?

From the literature I will summarise the overarching themes which have been addressed so far. Firstly, there is the issue of the centrality of the Bible to an individual's faith. This line of reconciliation is popular and the general argument appears to be that the Bible itself has been interpreted incorrectly. Christianity itself therefore is not against non-heterosexuality but the scholars who have translated and documented the Bible have done so in a hetero-centric manner (Maneker 2001; Reasons 2001; Udis-Kessler 1998). In doing so scholars have acknowledged the centrality of the Bible in the Christian faith but argued that this is not an area of negativity for non-heterosexuals. The second major theme uncovered is that some bisexuals completely dissociate themselves from organized religion. In this scenario the individual moves away from Church-attendance and official doctrine and uses more localised network points of reassurance (such as family and friends). Gibson argues that this is usually personal and due to disagreement with certain aspects of organized religion (Gibson 2000). This had led to the rise of more open-minded churches which preach inclusion such as the MCC (Metropolitan Community Church). Dobbs has argued that the inclusive and open-armed nature of these Churches has led to an increased interest in these Churches (Dobbs 2000).

There is an emerging body of literature regarding LGB (Lesbian, Gay and bisexual) Christians where the experiences of bisexuals are thought to be similar enough for inclusion. However, there is also an growing body of work in which bisexual issues are given separate analysis, the work of Yip (1999) and Wilcox (2003) in particular falls into this category. By exploring this body of work we can begin to see that bisexual individuals do face different challenges and we can explore how the experiences of bisexual Christians may be different to the stories put forward by the scholars who research in this area.

Yip points out two of the major research themes on non-heterosexual Christians: Firstly a comparison between religious and non-religious gays and secondly an analysis of the relationship between the individual and the institutionalised Church (Yip 1997, 166). It would seem that for Yip the difficulties with the Church for homosexuals is that the Church (the Roman Catholic Church in this instance, although the themes are universally applicable) is not flexible and too resistant to change. Although Christians are changing, the Church is not willing to do so (Yip 2003). Yip is arguing that the Church has not moved with the times:

In spite of such profound changes on all levels, the Churches continue with their 'bring them back to the fold' mission, instead of engaging with people in the circumstances in which they find themselves. This not only undermines their credibility and respectability, it also broadens the chasm between people's lived experiences and social reality, and the Church's religious strictures. (Yip 2003, 61).

Yip's vast work on the experiences of LGB Christians has also highlighted that religious individuals who are not heterosexual often face prejudice because of the focus upon sex.

There is a call for the Church to abandon its sex-phobic approach and an underlying concern that the Church is using an out-dated definition of sexuality:

On the specific issue of homosexuality, their dominant reductionist model that focuses primarily on acts, needs to give way to a new model that encapsulates all aspects of same sex relating (and indeed human relating), for instance, emotionality, relationality, mutuality commitment, risk and trust. (Yip 2003, 63)

More recently, along with a steady growth of research into the role of religious scripture which is covered in the following section, the focus has shifted to how individuals use teachings and religious resources to construct their lives and the tension between their religion and sexuality (see Gross and Yip 2010; Phillips 2005; Trzebiatowska 2009). One of the major recommendations has been to create an inclusive, welcoming space for non-heterosexual Christians. Furthermore, there has been a move to seeing Christianity in terms of religious individualism. This is often due to the prominence of sexuality in their lives. Wilcox (2002, 2003) in particular has explored how faith is constructed using sexuality as the starting point.

There has also been a re-evaluation of what it means to be Christian and what Christians actually believe in. Yip (2010) has argued that for many God is most likely to be 'perceived as someone who upholds love and justice, rather than someone who controls and prescribes' (2010, 47). Therefore belief is no longer seen as following a set of rules, rather it is a moral code of justice and equality. From the literature on non-heterosexuality and Christianity the over-arching theme seems to be that personal experience takes priority over traditional organized Christianity. Authority structures such as the Church and the Bible take a back-seat to personal experience. Both Yip (2002) and Wilcox (2002, 2003) discuss how these traditions are guides rather than scripts or blueprints which individuals must follow.

The Study

The study draws upon data collected from a UK survey of 80 men and women who self-identify as both bisexual and Christian. The research had two phases, a self-completing questionnaire aimed to find out what issues were important to bisexual Christians, followed by an in-depth interview which used the responses from the questionnaire as a very loose schedule. The research was exploratory in nature and tried to allow the respondents to find their own voice by using open-ended questioning and probing questions. The interviews themselves took the form of a life-story where I gently guided the topics and need for elaboration but gave the respondents the freedom to explore their own thoughts. This resulted in interviews which were often around two hours in length of detailed and nuanced data. Both sets of data have been used in this chapter.

Bisexual Christians are an invisible community in many respects in that they can simultaneously occupy both Church communities and gay and lesbian space. Obtaining a representative sample of bisexual Christians was not desirable or indeed possible. Heaphy et al. suggest in their study of gay relationships that it is impossible to define what other people consider as gay, and I would argue the same for bisexuality. It is not useful to create fixed definitions of such populations. Doing so imposes some sort of preconception on the part of the researcher and raises such issues as what bisexuals 'should' be like. For example, if as a researcher I think that all Christian bisexuals are polyamorous, then the sample obtained would be rather specific. It was imperative not to take any preconceptions about bisexuality forward into the sampling stage and as a researcher at this point it was not my role to qualify bisexuality (for example) in any way. Therefore it is more useful to allow respondents to define their own sexuality and then explore these definitions.

The lack of a ready-made sample emphasised the need for constructive sampling (examples being snowballing or respondents actively advertising or passing on my details to potential respondents) and an advertising campaign had to be developed. As no specific 'official' bisexual Christian groups exist, advertisement through non-heterosexual magazines, internet news-sites, mailing-lists, support groups/network, MCC (Young) Lesbian Gay Christian Movement ((Y)LGCM) and other 'open-armed' Churches took place. Some religious support groups were used, while several other groups rejected my advert as 'un-Christian', particularly Evangelical organizations that saw the term 'bisexual Christian' as a contradiction. In addition to such substantial advertising personal contact networks were used and snowballing was very effective during the questionnaire stage of the research.¹

The respondents in the full sample were aged between 18 and 72 with the average being approximately 29. The low average possibly reflects the sampling techniques used. A large focus of the recruitment was on the internet and electronic sources, and although it is rather stereotypical and not entirely accurate it is perhaps understandable that the average age of the respondents should be so low. Eight different denominations were represented: Anglican, Methodist, Metropolitan Community Church, Unitarian, Evangelical, Quaker, Catholic and Russian Orthodox although 35% (28) stated that they had no denomination. 53.8% (43) either never attended or only attended on special occasions; however 28.8% (23) attended weekly. The majority (78 or 97.5%) described their ethnicity as white British and most of the respondents (40 or 50%) were in a relationship (but not married or co-habiting).

The interviewee sample of 20 was varied also, although this was due to fortune rather than planning, as I interviewed everyone who was willing to take part. 55% (11) were male and 45% (9) were female. They were aged between 20 and 72 with the average age being approximately 31. Seven different denominations were represented. Anglican, Methodist, Metropolitan Community Church, Unitarian, Evangelical and Catholic. Four were not regular Church attendees. All respondents described their ethnicity as white British and three respondents were single with the rest in relationships (two were married).

Negotiating Disparate Identities in Church Life

This chapter now moves forward to explore how the respondents negotiated their sexual and spiritual identities within their religious lives. I will explore the strategies and techniques used to live as both bisexual and Christian in the religious sphere.

Church Life and Practice

Most of the respondents attended Church with some degree of frequency. Of the total sample (80 for first quantitative stage) just over a quarter (29%) attended Church on a regular weekly basis. If regular Church attendance is taken as meaning at least monthly attendance, then almost half of the sample (46%) were regular Church goers. This shows that bisexual Christians were able to take part in religious communal service. Furthermore, the respondents wanted to take part in such religious worship and their sexuality did not stop them from doing so.

¹ The questionnaires that were sent out were accompanied by an ethical statement which respondents had to read and sign, at this point they could opt to take part in the interview stage of the research. The ethical statement/consent forms were returned in separate envelopes for security reasons.

Table 1: Church attendance

Answer	Number (N)- 80	Percentage (%)
A few times a week	4	5
Weekly	23	28.8
Fortnightly	6	7.5
Monthly	4	5
Only on special occasions	23	28.8
Never	20	25

Table 1 shows that respondents have not completely abandoned institutionalised religion. Inclusion within religious space or a community of others was cherished by the participants and was an integral part of their belief-system. This was also shown in the fact that many of the respondents also did extra Church activities other than attending service. Almost one third of the sample regularly participated in Christian events such as coffee mornings or Bible study groups during the week. However, I feel that it would be unrealistic to conclude that this communal aspect of the faith is the driving factor behind sustaining ones' spirituality. 70% of the sample stated that for the 'Personal Spiritual Exploration' (exact phrase used in the questionnaire) was the main way to worship or re-affirm beliefs. This is therefore taken alongside Church attendance and extra activities. Rather than following a specific Church or congregation attendance was seen as a way of topping up one's religion rather than being the guiding force. Furthermore, it is apparent from the quantitative data that the issue of Church attendance was more complex than simply not attending because of the Churches standpoint on sexuality. Responses to reasons why people no longer attend Church listed personal issues of time and commitments rather than sexual issues. Due to the pressures of modern life respondents had to construct more practical means of worship, further highlighting the move to a more personalised form of Christian practice.

It is perhaps surprising however that the Bible was not more of a central part of the respondent's religious lives, especially when all of the interviewees spent time discussing how they interpreted the Bible. It would seem that respondents had moved away from the Bible precisely because of the perceived notion that the Bible is against non-heterosexuality. Although respondents were clear that the Bible had been both misinterpreted and misrepresented, they felt safer distancing themselves from the Bible. Respondents felt more secure with their faith by rejecting the Bible and creating their own form of Christianity free from preconceptions and traditional interpretations of the Bible. 66.3% (53) stated that they did not set time aside to read the Bible. This suggests that although the Bible is considered it is not the central tenant of the bisexual Christian belief-system, it is a side-piece or reference point to other practices.

Christianity is traditionally seen as communal religion and this is clearly discussed in the New Testament. For example Acts 15:30, when Paul and Barnabas arrive in Antioch and

gathered the congregation to deliver the letter from Jerusalem. Also there is a history of using the congregation as a place to discuss issues and problems as in Corinthians 2:6ff where issues of discipline are discussed with the involvement of locals. However, bisexual Christian practises are clearly less communal, only 15% (12) of the entire sample stated that they attend Christian groups which are not organized by the Church. The extra Church activities which the Church provides are also not seen as important as the table below seems to suggest:

Table 2: Is it important to be involved in extra church activities such as fund-raising?

Response	Number (N)- 80	Percentage (%)
Unimportant	52	65
Not certain	15	18.8
Important	10	12.5

The communal aspect of Church is therefore replaced either with family or friends as the coming together of individuals to worship and to support each other is seen as a Christian thing to do. However, in contemporary society for bisexual Christians this has clearly shifted from a rigid social institution where Christians attend organised worship at least on a weekly basis, to a more flexible fluid version of communal worship. This reflects a loosening of traditional structures as theorised by many contemporary writers (e.g. Bauman 2001; Beck 1992; Giddens 1991). Indeed Bauman would relate this to the individualisation process. He suggests a shift away from institutions that until recently we were entered into simply by birth. It is therefore ‘the emancipation of the individual from the ascribed, inherited and inborn determination or his or her social character: a departure rightly seen as a most conspicuous and seminal feature of the modern condition’ (Bauman 2001, 144). Yet the individualisation thesis as formulated by Bauman suggests instability which seems to contradict this need for community and the closeness of others. Bauman suggests that:

...if you wish “to relate”, to belong for the sake of your safety- keep your distance; if you expect and wish for fulfilment from your togetherness, do not make or demand commitments. Keep all the doors open, all of the time. (Bauman 2004, 29)

Here the suggestion is that in modern society we need to be wary of making such commitment and that the ability to move on from social ties is most valued. However, in terms of religious practices and the construction of religious identity there seems flaws with such an approach, which Bauman himself recognises. He surmounts this need for community with the rise of fundamentalism as a response to the anarchy of modern life, where individuals return to a more structured and prescribed life-style in order to feel some kind of connection to others. It would seem that it is not the religion one craves but the need to feel worth-while or part of something meaningful other than our individual lives. In a society rife with choice, close-knit fundamentalist communities offer family-like warmth (Bauman 2004, 47).

Religious Flexibility

Although there was a clear link between sexuality and faith, almost 20% of the sample did not feel the need to 'do' their religion as bisexuals. They were not consciously known as bisexual individuals in their religious communities. Furthermore, over half of the sample stated it was unimportant to be out within their religious community. In other words they did not worship as bisexual individuals; they worshipped communally as human beings. This shows that there was a clear divide within the sample with half of the respondents arguing that one has to practice Christianity as a bisexual individual and the other half arguing that it is possible (and/or important) to separate the two identities. Twenty-five of the 80 sample recognised that both sexuality and spirituality were important in informing faith but were unsure of whether this needed to be a part of their religious worship.

The practices of bisexual Christians are more private yet influenced by Christian teaching. For example 84% of the sample thought it was important to put time aside to pray. But this was often combined with less strict practices which are taken from other religions or less mainstream forms of Christianity, highlighting the flexibility of their form of Christianity. For example, meditation which is taken from Buddhism and 'silent time' which is the main form of worship for the Society of Friends (Quakers). Although the following respondents were not Quakers, Cornelius was Roman Catholic and Michael was non-denominational, they practice something which is characteristically Quaker:

I think about stuff a lot, usually when I drive to work, or if I'm out in the countryside walking. Yeah, that sort of thing.... I suppose it could be called meditation.... when I think deeply about spiritual things. (Cornelius)

I basically put aside an hour a day for meaningful time... it's like a relaxation time where I sit... perhaps with candles and so forth.... sometimes I will have music.... the candles aren't important either really none of it is really.... I just need a space to be alone with me and God and to think about the correct thing to do.... the Christian thing to do.... it's a reflection on the day and on the things that are going on in my life.... I think it's just a chance to take the outside world away.... to take my life outside of itself.... to look at something more important and clear.... that's it exactly.... clarity.... I just need to put aside society and look within me to find God and to talk to him without any sort of outside influence.... any noise.... any sort of disruptions or anything like that. (Michael)

Michael was an interesting respondent in that he clearly felt his religion was his own to adapt and re-create in order to fit with his own life experiences. He had an altar in the spare room of his house where he would go every evening. Although this seems rather radical, as with the candles, Michael is taking ideas from organised Christianity but adapting them based on his own ideas and beliefs.

I argue that bisexual Christians have had to be pro-active in their Christianity because of the way that bisexuality is perceived within the Church. This often resulted in a certain degree of religious flexibility such as the example above in order to reconcile such identities. However, the outcome for some bisexual Christians was to leave the Church completely. Rather than using the Church as a reference point these respondents found it impossible and undesirable to stay within the Church in order to live as bisexual Christians.

Leaving the Church

It is arguable that Christians leave the Church because of what Woodhead (2001) calls the 'turn to life', where the focus shifts towards the individuals own life rather than outside influences. Here I wish to explore the reasons why bisexual Christians have consciously decided not to attend church and their reasons for doing so.

As discussed previously, Christianity as taught through the church is seen as not an accurate representation of contemporary Christianity. The very dynamics of the Christian faith are questioned and what Christianity is all about. I have discovered several other explanations as to why bisexual Christians no longer attend and they will be the focus of this section:

1- *Reasons of principle.* As previously discussed in relation to the Bible, the respondents moved away from the Church because it was seen as being unwelcoming to bisexuals.

2- *Reasons of practice.* The practices of the Church are seen as excluding towards bisexuals, particularly the strong emphasis on marriage and coupledom.

3- *Reasons of misunderstanding.* The Anglican Church sees bisexuality as a choice where the individual can choose either homosexuality or heterosexuality (House of Bishops 2003). Respondents are therefore unwilling to engage with such misunderstanding.

There are certain aspects of Christianity which respondents felt were incompatible with bisexuality and this would lead them to be made unwelcome within a religious community. This was often felt without any need to have actually experienced such prejudice. The issue of marriage in particular was a concern for all respondents and the fact that they could not conclusively state that all bisexuals should get married due to extended relationship structures for example. The respondents themselves were unsure of the outcome of making marriage open to all:

Table 3: Christianity would be welcoming towards bisexuals if they were allowed to marry in Church

Response	Number (N)- 80	Percentage (%)
Strongly disagree	6	7.5
Disagree	9	11.3
Not certain	37	46.3
Agree	18	22.5
Strongly agree	3	3.8
Did not answer	7	8.8

Although the statistical data is rather unclear due to the majority of respondents selecting the ‘not certain’ answer, there is a definite suggestion that it is an issue for the respondents and this was explored further in the interviews. Erin was a 31 year-old female from just outside London who was in a civil partnership with her female partner. For her, the civil partnership was important in terms of publicity and making a positive step in the right directions. However, she combined this civil partnership with a blessing in her Church:

We went through the whole thing of whether we should hold on for when they are the same thing [to marriage] and equal.... but it was a big thing and I wanted it to be seen that our relationship was blessed by God. (Erin)

Alongside this Erin wanted to make the point that they had support for their relationship and mimicked the traditional church service in the blessing.

It was a huge thing to get it blessed and the district church wanted to discipline the guy who did it even though the URC said they'd do it... But there were lots of people who came, from India and Australia because they said it was right. They needed to be there because it was right....

However, Erin is very unique in her rather courageous fight to have her relationship blessed, as most interviewees saw the churches wariness towards same-sex marriage as a rejection of the validity of their bisexual/same-sex relationship. Erin states that she 'just couldn't wait for the church' and hoped her actions would force change.

For many respondents their resistance to organized faith was born out of a rejection of traditional relationship structures, e.g. a heterosexual married couple. Respondents see their own lives and relationships as second-rate and not good enough for the Christian church. Jim makes this point:

Marriage? That is a tricky one.... but the thing I think about is if I have two male friends and they can't get married why then should I ever marry a woman? I would be perpetuating these double standards. I'd like to have a relationship blessed by God but I cannot see why every relationship shouldn't be blessed. (Jim)

Jim is trying to downplay the fact that heterosexual marriage is seen as the Christian ideal and therefore should not be a reason for staying away from church. Respondents did feel however, that bisexual Christians ought to be monogamous as has been previously discussed. Apart from these pre-conceptions that bisexual Christians hold about Christianity or more specifically organized Christianity, there are reasons which may have been formulated due to actual rejection from organized faith. It should be noted however that few respondents said they had actually suffered negativity from their church, only 16 (19%) of sample. Those who did not answer were told in the question not to answer if they had not suffered any negativity. Table 4 below shows the types of negativity suffered:

Table 4: Forms of negativity suffered

Answer	Number (N)- 80	Percentage (%)
Verbal abuse	9	11.3
Exclusion	3	3.8
Other forms	4	5
Did not answer	64	80

However, it is my assertion that the reasons formulated are far more subtle and perhaps may not be detectable through the questionnaire. Respondents were often simply made to feel unwelcome rather than specifically targeted and this was because they were both non-heterosexual (therefore possible to have relations with members of the same-sex) and because they were bisexual (possible to have relations with members of either sex). Respondents were warned that they should only bring partners if they were opposite sex and indeed this is what some did:

I do attend Church, with my boyfriend... that is the lucky thing that he is male. The pastor came and spoke to me because I've spoken to him about sexuality things in the past and said not to bring

a female partner... (interviewer prompt)... it's something I'll work around when I come to it.
(Delilah)

Perhaps most surprising are the reports from non-attendees who had previously attended an MCC (Metropolitan Community Church). Jessica (who incidentally was the only respondent not to identify herself as White- British) wrote on the questionnaire in response to the question, 'Do you think the church is negative towards bisexuals?'

Yes, absolutely. I recently attended MCC (Metropolitan Community Church) – a gay led congregation. They were totally geared to lesbians and gay men only, and they were also very family orientated. If you had one [a partner] of the opposite sex, you were pretty much ignored and dismissed. (Jessica)

The idea that the MCC is a gay support group/network was also discussed by Michael who stated that the MCC was 'not religious enough' for him and that it focussed upon issues of homosexuality rather than inclusive spirituality. Here we clearly get an image of bisexuals being forcibly grouped into the same bracket as gay man and lesbians yet the fit is not a comfortable one and resulted in Jessica leaving the Church.

Concluding thoughts

This chapter has explored how bisexual Christians live their religious lives whilst holding onto identities which are often seen as contradictory. It looked at how they adjusted such identities within the religious sphere. It has done this by exploring three things: Church life and practices, religious flexibility and leaving the Church.

The research project found that for bisexual Christians Church attendance did not necessarily guide their spiritual lives and they were not often part of a stable congregation. The meaning of Church attendance for bisexual Christians is, just like the Bible, seen as a reference point which makes suggestions but is not central to their religious lives. The respondents used more private forms of religious practice within their daily lives such as meditation or silent prayer time to connect with God. One respondent told me that he was striving for a personal connection with God rather than a filtered or water down relationship that he would get through a member of the clergy. There is a clear indication that religious life has become less communal and formal and more private. Religious life for bisexual Christians is much more painstakingly constructed. This in turn shows that Christianity is indeed flexible and bisexual Christians have had to re-create their faith to fit with their sexuality. The example of Michael and his personal altar is an example of how bisexual Christians still hold onto certain traditional aspects of their faith but wish to do it on their own terms without preconceptions of sexual phobia and whether or not you can go to Church if you are bisexual.

The final section of the chapter explored a common occurrence for many of the respondents which was to leave the Church and no longer attend. Indeed many of the respondents had never actually engaged with institutional Christianity at all. Although respondents downplayed certain aspects of bisexuality or practiced their sexuality in a cautious manner, it was their religious faith that was mostly adapted. I argued that due to principles, religious practices and matters of misunderstanding, respondents often felt that in order to live as bisexual Christians they needed to step away from the Church. In changing their faith respondents did not see themselves as any less Christian but felt that their faith was theirs to change in accordance with their life experiences.

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